

Department of the Army, DoD

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to greater effort, and are instrumental in building and maintaining morale.

[26 FR 6434, July 18, 1961]

§ 578.2 Definitions.

The following definitions are furnished for clarity and uniformity in the determination and award of decorations:

(a) *Above and beyond the call of duty.* Exercise of a voluntary course of action, the omission of which would not justly subject the individual to censure for failure in the performance of duty. It usually includes the acceptance of existing danger or extraordinary responsibilities with praiseworthy fortitude and exemplary courage. In its highest degrees it involves the voluntary acceptance of additional danger and risk of life.

(b) *Combat heroism.* Act or acts of heroism by an individual engaged in:

(1) Actual conflict with an armed enemy, or

(2) Military operations which involve exposure to personal hazards, due to direct enemy action or the imminence of such action.

(c) *Combat zone.* The region where fighting is going on; the forward area of the theater of operations where combat troops are actively engaged. It extends from the front line to the front of the communications zone.

(d) *Duty of great responsibility.* Duty which, by virtue of the position held, carries the ultimate responsibility for the successful operation of a major command, activity, agency, installation, or project. The discharge of such duty must involve the acceptance and fulfillment of the obligation so as to greatly benefit the interests of the United States.

(e) *Duty of responsibility.* Duty, which by virtue of the positions held, carries a high degree of the responsibility for the successful operation of a major command, activity, agency, installation, or project, or which requires the exercise of judgment and decision affecting plans, policies, operations, or the lives and well being of others.

(f) *Heroism.* Specific acts of bravery or outstanding courage, or a closely related series of heroic acts performed within an exceptionally short period of time.

(g) *In connection with military operations against an armed enemy.* This phrase covers all military operations including combat, support, and supply which have a direct bearing on the outcome of an engagement or engagements against armed opposition. To perform duty or to accomplish an act of achievement in connection with military operations against an armed enemy, the individual must have been subjected either to personal hazard as a result of direct enemy action (or the imminence of such action) or must have had the conditions under which his duty or accomplishment took place complicated by enemy action or the imminence of enemy action.

(h) *Key individual.* A person who is occupying a position that is indispensable to an organization, activity, or project.

(i) *Meritorious achievement.* A praiseworthy accomplishment, with easily discernible beginning and end, carried through to completion. The length of time involved is not a consideration but speed of accomplishment may be a factor in determining the worth of the enterprise.

(j) *Meritorious service.* Praiseworthy execution of duties over a period of time. Service differs from achievement in that service concerns a period of time while achievement concerns an enterprise having a definite beginning and end but not necessarily connected with a specific period of time.

(k) *Peacetime criteria.* The criteria applied:

(1) In a period when the United States is not engaged in the prosecution of a formal declared war, or

(2) Outside a combat zone when the United States is engaged in military operations against an armed enemy, but is not prosecuting a formal declared war, except that in the communications zone, those individuals whose duties are in connection with military operations against an armed enemy may be considered under war criteria.

(l) *Shall have distinguished himself or herself by.* The person thus described must have, by praiseworthy accomplishment, set himself apart from his comrades or from other persons in the same or similar circumstances. Determination of this distinction requires

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careful consideration of exactly what is or was expected as the ordinary, routine, or customary behavior and accomplishment for individuals of like rank and experience for the circumstances involved.

(m) *Wartime criteria*. The criteria to be applied under the following conditions:

(1) During a period of formal, declared war and for 1 year after the cessation of hostilities, or

(2) During a period of military operations against an armed enemy and for 1 year after the cessation of hostilities. Only those individuals actually in the combat zone or those individuals in the communications zone whose duties involve direct control or support of combat operations, are to be considered under wartime criteria.

(n) *Active Federal military service*. The term “active Federal military service” means all periods of active duty and, except for service creditable for the Armed Forces Reserve Medal, excludes

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periods of active duty for training. Service as a cadet at the United States Military Academy is considered to be active duty.

(o) *He, his, him*. Include the terms “she” and “her,” as appropriate.

(p) *Medal*. A term used in either of two ways:

(1) To include the three categories of awards, namely: decorations, Good Conduct Medal, and service medals; or

(2) To refer to the distinctive physical device of metal and ribbon which constitutes the tangible evidence of an award.

(q) *Officer*. Except where expressly indicated otherwise, the word “officer” means “commissioned or warrant officer.”

[21 FR 7672, Oct. 6, 1956, as amended at 26 FR 6434, July 18, 1961]

§ 578.3 General provisions governing the awards of decorations.

(a) *To whom awarded*. See figure 1.